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The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the **Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)**.

For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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USFA Releases 2012 On-Duty Deaths Numbers

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has announced the release of the report [Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2012](#). There were 81 on-duty firefighter fatalities in the United States. Some specifics include:

- Fatalities occurred in 31 states, 1 Territory, and 1 overseas military facility;
- North Carolina and Pennsylvania had the highest number with 9 each. Texas and New York followed with 6 each, and California with 5;
- There was a record low number of firefighter deaths caused by heart attacks;
- For the second year in a row, no firefighters died by becoming lost or disoriented inside of a burning structure.
- Only 1 firefighter was caught or trapped inside a burning structure;
- Four firefighters died as a result of structural collapses;
- Two firefighters were shot and killed in 2012 when they responded to an intentionally set fire used by an individual set upon murder.
- Deaths by vehicle crashes were back up in 2012 with 18 firefighters killed.

For additional information on firefighter fatalities, the [annual fatality reports](#) from 1986 through 2012 and current year firefighter deaths, visit the [USFA website](#).

(Source: [USFA](#))

ESF #15 – External Affairs SOP Updated

Timely, regular, and accurate information disseminated to the public is critical during a disaster. Emergency Support Function (ESF) #15, External Affairs, is responsible for managing public information, media relations, and intergovernmental affairs upon activation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA updated the [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\) for ESF #15](#), originally produced in 2009, to reflect several policy changes occurring in the intervening years. They also added examples through case studies to show best practices in emergency communications, including Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon Bombing, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, and the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis.

Under the SOP, an External Affairs Officer is responsible for coordinating information exchanges with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and serves as senior advisor for all intergovernmental matters. State and local officials should be familiar

The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.

with this document so they know what to expect when a disaster requiring a coordinated federal response is declared in their region.

The SOP provides detailed job duties for various positions; checklists; samples of daily schedules, letters, and media monitoring; and communications summaries.

(Source: [FEMA](#))

9-1-1 Operations in Active Shooter Incidents

Urgent Communications magazine published several articles recently on 9-1-1/PSAP lessons learned during active shooter incidents. Responders and emergency communicators used similar procedures and faced similar problems during two significant events more than 10 years apart.

The [Columbine school shooting in 1999](#) is often considered the incident by which all others are judged, because it was one of the first mass casualty active shooter events in the United States, the actions of first responders was so well documented, and because the incident itself was so stunning. Many jurisdictions now train personnel based on best practices learned during and after Columbine.

The article describing 9-1-1 response to the [mall shooting in Oregon last December](#) stresses terminology used by dispatchers at the beginning of the incident. Describing something as “a shooting” versus “an active shooter” brings two totally different responses from law enforcement. Now that the term “active shooter” has a specific meaning, dispatchers should be wary not to use the two terms interchangeably.

These articles also touch on two things that didn’t go so smoothly in either incident:

- Lack of a reliable communications system – both events had problems with either the 9-1-1 call system or computer aided dispatching (CAD) because the systems were overwhelmed and crashed;
- Police and fire need an existing working relationship – both articles sited this as a significant problem during the respective incidents.

(Source: [Urgent Communications](#))

NFPA Asks: How Do You Care For Your PPE?

Dirty, contaminated gear is a serious health hazard to the fire service. Improperly cleaned gear is thought to be a factor in cancer rates among firefighters, as the [Firefighter Cancer Support Network](#) and the [Fire Smoke Coalition](#) are showing. Off-gassing and toxins from improperly cleaned PPE forces repetitive exposure to firefighters.

The Fire Protection Research Foundation (the National Fire Protection Agency’s research affiliate) is asking firefighters across the country take part in a survey on the subjects of PPE cleaning and gear replacement policies in fire departments. The survey will only take a minute to complete, and the answers collected will help define policy and standards in the future.

Information gathered from the [PPE Care and Maintenance Survey](#) will be published in a final summary report in December of 2013.

(Source: [NFPA](#))

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